

## CLAIM LISTING

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Claims 1 through 10 (Canceled).

11. (Currently amended) A tampon applicator assembly comprising:

a barrel having an insertion tip area with an insertion tip, a tapered main section adjacent said insertion tip area disposed between an insertion tip and a finger grip adjacent said tapered main section and opposite said insertion tip area, said insertion tip area having a taper that decreases from said tapered main section to the insertion tip, said tapered main section having a maximum outer dimension located closer to said finger grip than to said insertion tip;

a plunger being slidably received in said barrel; and

a pledget being disposed in said barrel ~~between said insertion tip and said plunger~~ so that a force applied on said plunger expels said pledget from said barrel at said insertion end.

12. (Original) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said maximum outer dimension is located from said insertion tip about 55% to 85% of an overall length of said barrel.

13. (Original) The assembly as in claim 12, wherein said maximum outer dimension is located from said insertion tip about 60% to 75% of said overall length of said barrel.

14. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said tapered main section has a main section taper ratio of about 1.07 to about 1.15.

15. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 14, wherein said tapered main section taper ratio is about 1.08 to about 1.13.

16. (Original) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said insertion tip further comprises a plurality of petals.

17. (Original) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said insertion tip has a taper ratio of between about 0.66 and about 1.6.

18. (Original) The assembly as in claim 17, wherein said taper ratio is between about 0.7 and about 0.9.

19. (Original) The assembly as in claim 16, wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio of about 0.8 to about 3.

20. (Original) The assembly as in claim 19, wherein said petal length-to-width ratio is over about 2.

21. (Currently amended) A tampon applicator assembly comprising:  
a barrel having an insertion tip area with an insertion tip, a tapered main section adjacent said insertion tip area, disposed between an insertion tip and a finger grip adjacent said tapered main section and opposite said insertion tip area, said insertion tip area having a taper that decreases from said tapered main section to the insertion tip, said tapered main section having a main section taper ratio of about 1.07 to about 1.15;

a plunger being slidably received in said barrel; and

a pledget being disposed in said barrel ~~between said insertion tip and said plunger~~ so that a force applied on said plunger expels said pledget from said barrel at said insertion end.

22. (Original) The assembly as in claim 21, wherein said main section taper ratio is about 1.08 to about 1.13.

23. (Currently amended) The assembly as in claim 21, wherein said tapered main section has a maximum outer dimension located closer to said finger grip than to said insertion tip.

24. (Original) The assembly as in claim 23, wherein said maximum outer dimension is located from said insertion tip about 55% to 85% of an overall length of said barrel.

25. (Original) The assembly as in claim 21, wherein said finger grip has a gripping region disposed between a first region and a second region, said first and second regions each having an outer dimension that is about 10% to about 30% larger than an outer dimension of said gripping region.

26. (Original) The assembly as in claim 21, wherein said insertion tip further comprises a plurality of petals.

27. (Original) The assembly as in claim 26, wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio of about 0.8 to about 3.

28. (Original) The assembly as in claim 27, wherein said petal length-to-width ratio is over about 2.

29. (Original) The assembly as in claim 21, wherein said insertion tip has a taper ratio of between about 0.66 and about 1.6.

30. (Original) The assembly as in claim 29, wherein said taper ratio is between about 0.7 and about 0.9.

31. (Currently amended) A tampon applicator assembly comprising:

a barrel having an insertion tip area with an insertion tip, a tapered main section adjacent said insertion tip area disposed between an insertion tip and a finger grip adjacent said tapered main section and opposite said insertion tip area, said insertion tip area having a taper that decreases from said tapered main section to the insertion tip, said insertion tip having a plurality of petals and a taper ratio of more than about 0.66;

a plunger being slidably received in said barrel; and

a pledget being disposed in said barrel ~~between said insertion tip and said plunger~~ so that a force applied on said plunger opens said plurality of petals to expel said pledget from said barrel at said insertion end.

32. (Currently amended) The assembly as in claim 31, wherein said tapered main section has a maximum outer dimension located closer to said finger grip than to said insertion tip.

33. (Currently amended) The assembly as in claim 31, wherein said tapered main section has a main section taper ratio of about 1.08 to about 1.13.

34. (Original) The assembly as in claim 31, wherein said finger grip has a gripping region disposed between a first region and a second region, said gripping region having an outer dimension that is smaller than an outer dimension of each of said first and second regions.

35. (Original) The assembly as in claim 31, wherein said plurality of petals have a petal length-to-width ratio of about 0.8 to about 3.

36. (Original) The assembly as in claim 35, wherein said petal length-to-width ratio is over about 2.

37. (Currently amended) A tampon applicator assembly comprising:

a barrel having an insertion tip area with an insertion tip, a tapered main section adjacent said insertion tip area ~~disposed between an insertion tip~~ and a finger grip adjacent said tapered main section and opposite said insertion tip area, said insertion tip area having a taper that decreases from said tapered main section to the insertion tip, said insertion tip having a plurality of petals, said plurality of petals having a petal length-to-width ratio over about 2 to about 3;

a plunger being slidably received in said barrel; and

a pledget being disposed in said barrel ~~between said insertion tip and said plunger~~ so that a force applied on said plunger opens said plurality of petals to expel said pledget from said barrel at said insertion end.

38. (Currently amended) The assembly as in claim 37, wherein said tapered main section has a maximum outer dimension located closer to said finger grip than to said insertion tip.

39. (Previously presented) The assembly as in claim 38, wherein said maximum outer dimension is located from said insertion tip about 55% to 85% of an overall length of said barrel.

40. (Currently amended) The assembly as in claim 37, wherein said tapered main section has a main section taper ratio of about 1.08 to about 1.13.

41. (Original) The assembly as in claim 37, wherein said finger grip has a gripping region disposed between a first region and a second region, said gripping region having an outer dimension that is smaller than an outer dimension of each of said first and second regions.

42. (Original) The assembly as in claim 37, wherein said insertion tip has a taper ratio of more than about 0.66.

43. (Original) The assembly as in claim 42, wherein said taper ratio is between about 0.7 and 0.9.

44. (New) The assembly as in claim 11, wherein said tapered main section is tapered linearly from said maximum outer dimension to said insertion tip area.

45. (New) The assembly as in claim 23, wherein said tapered main section is tapered linearly from said maximum outer dimension to said insertion tip area.